1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeg-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

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fetching water, but that now she was to go to a life that was both sweet and bitter. Finally, a group of quite little girls arrived on the scene with bundles of food tied up in cloth on their heads and the bride, still weeping loudly, was carried off by her girl companions across the fields into the sunset. It was a moving sight, this taking away of the bride to her new life, but it was noticeable that no member of the bridegroom's family came to fetch her. She was simply taken away by her own people to his village.

Next morning I started before dawn with my assistant Mr. Sampat Singh on the long descent to Sirsitti. The scenery on the way was magnificent. From the brow of the hill we could see stretching away almost to Orissa the great plain of Konta and Sukma with the peaks of hills rising above the mist just touched by the morning sun. When we reached the village we found the two marriages in progress, though everyone was a little jaded having been up dancing all night. There were little camps outside the village for the two brides and the bridegrooms' families sent food and liquor out to them. During the morning there was some desultory dancing in the middle of the village, and a group of girls sat round each bride who wailed loudly from time to time as the girls sang to her about the sorrows and hardships of the married life to which she was now going. Young men from Gogonda, the brides' village, cooked the food supplied by the bridegrooms and this was ready about three o'clock in the afternoon. The visitors assembled beneath a magnificent mango tree outside the village, and the feast was very carefully served by the young men; an exact number of leaf-cups was prepared and each contained the same number of bits of pork; an equal number contained identical portions of rice. The boys then served the cups, first to the women and then to the men. Others went round pouring gravy on the rice and they all ate together. When the meal was over they went to a stream near by and drank, kneeling down and putting their faces right into the water to suck it up.

Then the girls assembled round the first bride, who was still covered with the shawl which all through that sweltering day she had not once laid aside, and danced with her into the centre of the village. Another party escorted the second bride and soon the scene was very lively with two separate dances whirling round the square. Presently the first party danced up to the future husband's house. They gathered in a very tight block before the door and began to sing loudly and rapidly, jerking their bodies to and fro from the hips, a song which meant, 'Come and get her if you can, brother; come and catch her if you can'. For some time the bridegroom stood in a rather embarrassed fashion in the

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natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Haimendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kuruk fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

● 264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other 146 people, would eat more of these things if they could get them But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

539

Nimāre uche dāntona rawnāni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāntona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukār dukār roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi le dukār arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hihāt huro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpane doyo arit roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Puhle dhelāt rawnāl roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Wetle marāte kawrāl roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woker inta roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaka reyon kawrāl roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222 539 Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

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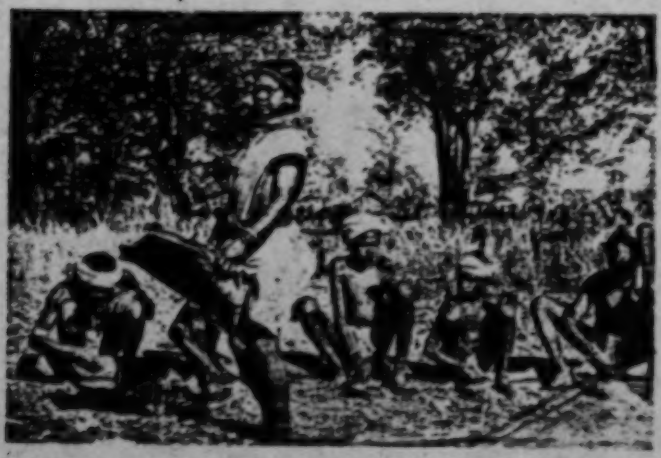
At Kongera a motiari passes on her drink to a chelik

Motiari serving food to the chelik at Nayanar



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2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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A motiari serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]